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September 13, 2021

Leah Hollins
Board Chair
Island Health
1952 Bay Street
Victoria BC V8R 1J8

Via email to: Louise.Carlow@viha.ca

Dear Leah Hollins

Re: Regular Pumping Out of Septic Tanks to Support the Health of Water Bodies

At our August 18, 2021, Council meeting, a resolution was passed by Council that I write to Island Health outlining the concerns we have with septic tanks and their impact on the health of our water bodies.

Septic systems, especially old and failing ones, can introduce wastewater into the environment, contributing to the pollution of our water bodies and aquifers. Sewer is not an option in some areas of our Municipality like Maple Bay. At least one business opportunity was limited by sub-standard septic systems and site conditions that precluded upgrades from meeting current standards. We believe that many septic systems located in proximity to sensitive areas and water bodies may not be functioning properly, and that this is contributing to water that is unsafe for recreational use because of high bacteria counts and blue-green algae blooms

One strategy for addressing impacts and extending the life of a disposal field may be through the regular pumping of septic tanks and disposal of the septage into a sewage treatment facility. However, the costs associated with pumping and disposal in North Cowichan may be a significant factor preventing business owners and homeowners from regularly emptying their tanks. There are likely many other unexplored options for mitigating this problem.

We would like to request the following information and input from Island Health:

- Does Island Health feel more should be done to protect our environment from the risks of failed systems?
- Does Island Health have an interest in partnering with North Cowichan on developing a strategy and looking at options for reducing the environmental impacts caused by private septic fields or ineffective septic fields in order to reduce the amount of effluent seeping into our beaches and waterways?

We welcome your input and advice related to this subject and look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al Siebring', with a stylized, cursive script.

Al Siebring

Mayor

mayor@northcowichan.ca

c: David Conway, Director, Engineering Projects, North Cowichan
Kathy MacNeil, President & CEO, Island Health
North Cowichan Council
Ted Swabey, CAO, North Cowichan
Dr. Shannon Waters, Medical Health Officer